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[Review of the book *Labor Regulation in the Global Economy*]

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[Review of the book *Labor Regulation in the Global Economy*]

Abstract
[Excerpt] This is a practical and useful volume on labor standards in today's highly globalized world. An introduction is followed by ten chapters, some of them general, talking about the ILO or the WTO, and some more specific, focusing on the United States and Europe. The general chapters cover the ILO, corporate codes of conduct, efforts to introduce labor standards into the multilateral trade regime, arguments for and against labor standards in trade, and policy implications. The specific chapters cover U.S. initiatives on child labor, labor standards in the bilateral trade agreements entered into by the United States and the European Union, labor standards among the European Union member countries, and NAFTA.

Keywords
labor standards, globalization, trade, policy, United States, Europe

Comments
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Labor Regulation in the Global Economy. By George Tsogas. Armonk, N.Y.: M.E. Sharpe, 2001. 216 pp. ISBN 0-7656-0557-0, $64.95 (cloth); 0-7656-0558-9, $22.95 (paper).

This is a practical and useful volume on labor standards in today's highly globalized world. An introduction is followed by ten chapters, some of them general, talking about the ILO or the WTO, and some more specific, focusing on the United States and Europe. The general chapters cover the ILO, corporate codes of conduct, efforts to introduce labor standards into the multilateral trade regime, arguments for and against labor standards in trade, and policy implications. The specific chapters cover U.S. initiatives on child labor, labor standards in the bilateral trade agreements entered into by the United States and the European Union, labor standards among the European Union member countries, and NAFTA.

The strength of the book is its combination of sound institutional description with strong opinions and judgments. Regarding the latter, I do not agree with all of Tsogas's views—in particular, I take exception to the two-page critique of me, which I thought misrepresented the approach I have taken to labor standards. I found the coverage to be imbalanced in places: for instance, six pages on the GE and Honeywell cases in NAFTA versus one page on the 1998 ILO Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work—arguably the most important development in labor standards in decades—and no mention at all of the ILO's pathbreaking "Decent Work" initiative. Occasionally, the volume wanders off in strange directions, such as in the subsection "Any Role for 'HR' in HR?", where the author talks about the core competencies of HR professionals in handling an ethics policy. Was it a slip of the pen (or the keyboard) when the author referred to the HR function as the "human rights" function? Still, this is a book that I would recommend to newcomers to the subject and to more experienced practitioners alike.

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